

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF  
 **Human Rights**

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## YOUR RIGHT TO EQUAL HOUSING

### WHAT IS DISCRIMINATION?

Discrimination happens when the right to equal access in housing is denied. Under the Illinois Human Rights Act you are entitled to choose where to live and to enjoy the use of the facilities in the unit without feeling intimidated or discriminated against. The Illinois Human Rights Act also prohibits discrimination in the sale or rental of real property.

### WHO DOES THE LAW APPLY TO?

The law applies to owners, managers, salespersons, brokers, rental agents, or other agents or employees of the owner or the owner's agents. Newspapers and other publications that print discriminatory advertising can also be charged under the Act. Houses, apartments, condominiums, mobile home parks, vacant land, offices, stores and other types of residential and commercial property are covered under the law.

### PROHIBITED ACTIVITY: WHAT THE LAW COVERS

The Illinois Human Rights Act provides protection from discrimination when it is based upon **race, color, religion, sex (including sexual harassment), national origin, ancestry, age (40 and over), marital status, physical, mental or perceived disability, military status or unfavorable military discharge, familial status, sexual orientation (including gender identity) and order of protection status.**

### EXAMPLES OF PROHIBITED ACTIVITY:

- Refusing to engage in a real estate transaction;
- Altering the terms or conditions of a real estate transaction;
- Refusing to receive or transmit a bona fide offer in a transaction;
- Blockbusting, racial steering, panic peddling or using restrictive covenants;
- Misrepresenting the availability of property for inspection, rental or sale;
- Discriminating against families with children under the age of 18
- Requiring extra charges for the use of guide, hearing or support dogs other than for actual damages caused by such animals;
- Indicating in writing a direct or indirect intent to commit unlawful discrimination;
- Refusing to allow reasonable accommodations and modifications of premises occupied by persons with disabilities. (Those making accommodations must also absorb these expenses. With regard to structural modifications, the landlord may require the restoration of the premises to the original condition upon the tenant vacating the premises.)



#### IF YOU HAVE BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST HOUSING:

You may initiate a charge of discrimination by writing, calling, or visiting the Illinois Department of Human Rights within one year of the act of discrimination. You must fill out a Complainant Information Sheet which can be found on [www.illinois.gov/dhr](http://www.illinois.gov/dhr) under "Filing a Charge," "Fair Housing."

The sooner the complaint is filed, the better. There is no fee for filing with the Department and you are not required to have an attorney.

#### WHAT YOU SHOULD TELL US WHEN YOU FILE A CHARGE:

- Name of the owner, landlord, real estate agent, broker, home appraiser, lending institution or insurance company, condo or housing association, city or municipality, newspaper or other person you want to file against including mailing address, telephone number.
- The address and size of the property being sold or rented.
- The most recent date the alleged discrimination took place.
- The reason you believe the action was discriminatory.
- Names and contact information for any witnesses.
- Bring copies of any relevant documents (advertisement, listing, etc).

#### WHERE TO FILE A COMPLAINT:

James R. Thompson Center\*  
100 W. Randolph St., 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Chicago, IL 60601

312-814-6229 (voice), (866) 740-3953 (TTY)

**Office Hours:** Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm

**Intake Interviewing:** Monday through Thursday

*\*Note:*

*All visitors to the Thompson Center are subject to screening and must have a valid government-issued picture ID to access the building such as driver's license, State ID, passport, ITIN card, etc.*

#### LENGTH OF THE PROCESS:

The Illinois Human Rights Act requires IDHR to finish the investigation and make a finding within 100 days of filing a perfected charge, unless it is impracticable to do so. IDHR makes every attempt to complete a timely investigation; however, some investigations will take longer, depending upon the case.

#### TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT:

For workshop/training on housing discrimination or for complimentary educational materials, please contact the Fair Housing Outreach Coordinator at 312-814-6278.